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Geographical Notes. VII. Tun-Sun 頓遜 or Tian-Sun 典遜 Tēnasserim or Tānah-Sāri

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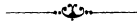
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GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.



VII.

TUN-SUN 頓 遜 TĒNASSERIM
or
TIAN-SUN 典 遜 TĀNAH-SĀRI

BY

G. SCHLEGEL.



We have already often had occasion to mention incidentally this important state upon the Malay Peninsula; but for completeness' sake we will reproduce here all the information we have found in Chinese geographers and historians relative to this once powerful and rich country.

First mention of it is found in the Appendix to the Books of the *Liang*-dynasty (A.D. 502--556), in the Description of *Fu-nan* or Siam, where we read:

"More than 3000 *li* from the southern frontier (*viz.* of Siam) lies the state of *Tun-sun*, situated upon a steep hill in the sea and a 1000 miles square. Its capital lies ten chinese miles away from the sea. There are five kings who reign together and who are tributary to Siam.

"At its eastern frontier it has intercourse with all the merchants from *Kiao-chow* (Tongking).

"Its western frontier borders upon India and Arsak (Parthia); and all the countries of the frontiers come and go there for trade.

"To its markets people flock from east and west, and it is daily visited by more than ten-thousand men. Every description of precious and valuable wares is found there.

"There is besides, a wine-tree which resembles the pome-granate-tree (*Punica granatum*). The people collect the juice of its flowers and let it stand in a jar, when it becomes wine in a few days" ¹).

Tu's Tung-tian is a little more explicit. He says:

"The state of *Tun-sun* was first heard of during the Liang-dynasty (It is also called *Tian-sun*). It lies in the sea upon a steep hill. The country is a thousand miles square. There are five kings who reign together and who are tributary to Siam.

"Its northern frontier is about 3000 miles distant from *Fu-nan* (Siam). At its eastern frontier it has intercourse with *Kiao-chow* (Tongking). Its western frontier borders upon India and Arsak; and all the merchants of the frontier-countries come in great numbers to this state in order to trade there.

"To the other side *Tun-sun* extends for more than a thousand

1) 其南界三千餘里有頓遜國。在海崎上。地方千里。城去海十里。有五王並羈。屬扶南。頓遜之東界通交州諸賈人。其西界接天竺、安息。徼外諸國往還交易。其市東西交會、日有萬餘人。珍物寶貨無不有。又有酒樹如安石榴。採其花汁、停瓮中、數日成酒。

Vide 南史、海南諸國, Chap. 78, fol. 4 *recto*. This is probably the *Nipa fruticans*, which is not found in Java or Sumatra. In Borneo the sap of the flowers is collected in order to distil palmwine like in Cochinchina and in the Philippines (Miquel, Flora van Ned.-Indië, Vol. III, p. 152).

miles into sea, where a boundless ocean is found, which ships have never been able to cross.

"To its markets people flock from east and west, and it is visited daily by more than ten-thousand men. All sorts of precious and valuable wares are found there.

"There is besides a wine-tree, like the pomegranate tree. The people collect the juice of its flowers and let it stand in a jar, when it becomes wine in a few days.

"It produces the Betonyplant ²⁾, a twig of which stuck into the ground, lives again. Its leaves resemble those of the *Tu-liang* ³⁾ and it serves to perfume clothes ⁴⁾.

"In this country are some ten species of *K'iupoh* (old sound *Kupah* ⁵⁾), and other flowers, which do not wither in summer or in winter. Every day several cart-loads of them are collected for sale. When dried, they are still more fragrant. They are also pulverized in order to rub the body with them.

"It is a custom with these people to make often use of bird-burial. When a man is on the point of dying, his relatives and friends sing and dance and convey him to the country, where there are birds like geese, having bills like parrots, and of a red colour which come on flying in myriads. The family then withdraws, and when the birds have entirely devoured the flesh, they go away and next the bones are burnt and sunk into the sea. He is then considered

2) *Betonica officinalis*, called in Sanscrit *Tamālapatra* 多摩羅跋.

3) 都羅 = 兜羅, Skt. *tūla*, is the same as the 都梁香. *Liang* is used for *la*. Cf. St. Julien, *Méthode*, N^o. 879. The word represents in the first place a kind of fine incense (細香) and next the Cottonplant. *Fan-yih Ming-i*, Chap. XVIII, fol. 14 *recto*.

4) 裊香, a perfumebag attached to one's clothes; 裊衣, perfumed clothes.

5) Probably the Malay and Sumatran *Kūpa*, a species of *Jambosa* of which Filet, *Plantkundig Wdb. van Ned.-Indië*, enumerates several species: *Kūpa*, *Kūpa-dessa*, *Kūpa-gatel*, *Kūpa-landak* and *Kūpa-manuk*. Miquel enumerates 70 species.

to be a man of superior conduct, who will certainly be reborn in heaven. But when the birds fly to and fro and do not devour the man, he is very much afflicted, and considers himself as impure.

“He then has recourse to the fire-burial, considering himself as a man of inferior conduct. Those who are not able to jump alive into the flames, and are neither devoured by the birds, are considered as men of the lowest conduct”⁶).

The Chinese Encyclopedia *San-tsai Tu-hwui* gives a fine engraving of a man of *Tun-sun* with the following legend:

“The state of *Tun-sun* is situated upon an island in the sea. When a man is on the point of dying, his relatives bring him, singing and dancing, out of the town. There are birds like geese

6) 按杜氏通典頓孫國梁時聞焉。[一日典孫]。在海崎山上。地方千里。五王並羈。屬扶南。北去扶南可三千里。其國之東界通交州。其西界接天竺及安息。徼外諸國賈人多至其國而互市焉。頓遜廻入海中千餘里、漲海無涯岸、舶未曾得逕過也。其市東西交會、日有萬餘人。珍物寶貨無種不有。又有酒樹似安石榴。採其花汁。停酒甕中。數日成酒。出藿香、插枝便生。葉如都梁以裛衣。國有區撥等花十餘種。冬夏不衰。日載數十車、貨之。其花燥、更芬馥。亦末爲粉以傅身焉。其俗又多鳥葬。將死、親賓歌舞於郭外。有鳥如鵝、口鸚鵡、而紅色。飛來萬許。家人避之。鳥食肉將盡乃去。燒其骨、沉海中。以爲上行人也、必生天。鳥若廻翔不食、其人乃自悲、復以爲己有穢。乃更就火葬、以爲次行也。若不能生入火、又不被鳥食、以爲下行也。 Cf. *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, fol. 11 recto.

which come flying in myriads. The family then withdraws, and when the birds have entirely devoured the flesh, they go away. The bones are then burnt and sunk into the sea. This is called "Bird-burial" 7).

This is all the Chinese tell us about this interesting country. The passage about the "boundless ocean which no ship had been able to cross", 8) which Groeneveldt (Notes, p. 119, note 7) thinks to have been corrupted, is quite right. In sailing all along the eastern shores of the Malay peninsula, the China sea is reached. The *Nan-shi* say: "It is said that at the eastern frontiers of *Fu-nan* (Siam) is an immense ocean 9), in which is found a large island, on which is situated the state of *Chupoh* 10). East of this state is the island of *Ma-wu*, and going still further east for 1000 miles in this ocean, one arrives at a large spontaneous burning island, on which grows a tree in the midst of the flames, etc. 11).

In my description of *Fu-nan* (Siam) I will return to this sea, which was first crossed by a king of Siam, called *Fan-mân* (范蔓). The volcano, of which is spoken in the text, is probably the

7) 按三才圖會頓遜國在海島上。將死親戚歌舞送於郭外。有鳥如鵝飛來萬數。家人避之。其鳥食肉盡乃去。即燒骨沈水。謂之鳥葬。 Cf. *Pien-i-tien*, Chap. 99, fol. 12 *recto*.

8) 漲海無崖岸、舡船未曾得經過也。

9) 又傳扶南東界即大漲海。

10) *Tu*, in his *T'ung-tian*, calls it *Tu-poh* (杜薄). This may be either *Tobo*, upon the eastern coast of Ceram, which has a population of 15,000 mountaineers and 500 mahomedans and heathenish inhabitants, or *Tobah*, an island in the Moluccos, upon the westcoast of the northern part of Gilolo.

11) 又傳扶南東界即大漲海。海中有大洲、洲上有諸薄國。國東有馬五洲。復東行漲海千餘里、至自然大洲。其上有樹生火中。云云。

Vide 南史, Chap. 78, fol. 4 *verso*.

sugarloaf formed big volcano in *Makian*, one of the Molucco-islands, most renowned for its cloves, which the Siamese, and later on the Chinese, went to fetch there.

The most important fact contained in the above narratives is that of the immense quantity of flowers *Tun-sun* produced, and which explains the name of *Tānah sārī*, Land of Flowers" ¹²⁾ which the Malays gave to it. The Siamese have corrupted this name to *Tānaosí* and the English still more to *Tenasserim* or *Tanasserim*; it is called *Ta-nen-thā-ri* by the Burmese. Abdur-razzāk (1442) writes *Tenāseri*; in the "Roteiro de Vasco da Gama", it is called *Tenaçar*. In 1506 it was called *Tenazar*; Barbosa (1516) calls it *Tanasery*, Frederike (1568) *Tenasarim*; Aīn-i-Akbārī (ca. 1590) *Dahnasari* ¹³⁾.

It is highly probable that the chinese name is only a transcription of the old siamese name of this country, which we suppose to have been *Dōn-suén*, or *Dīn-suén*, "The Land (*dōn* or *dīn*) of Gardens (*suén*" ¹⁴⁾), which would explain the two chinese transcriptions *Tun-sun* and *Tian-sun*. The character 典 is pronounced in Canton *tin*.

Tenasserim was formerly one of the most frequented ports in India beyond the Ganges, and where the Dutch E. I. company had a large factory. It lies in 12° 2' N. and 98° 55' E., and its capital is indeed distant 3 miles (10 chinese miles) from the sea wherein the river, on the shores of which the town is situated, runs, at a place called *Mergui*, situated in 12° 29' N. and 98° 31' E.

12) Cf. Yule, Marco Polo, II, 255; Van der Tuuk, Taalkundige Aanteekeningen en Bladwijzer van het Bataksche Leesboek, p. 129. *Timah sari*, "flowery tin" is the name given by the Malays to zinc, on account of the so-called zincflowers. (Pijnappel, Malay Dict. I, 96 and II, 15; Von de Wall, Malay Dict. I, 441).

13) Yule, Hobson Jobson, p. 695—96. Cf. *Nāgasārī*, the Dragon (*nāga*) flower (*sārī*), name of the *Mesua ferrea*, in Chinese 龍華. Von de Wall, Malay Dict. III, 203.

14) Cf. *Xao* (Chao) *suén*, a gardener, man living in the gardens, inhabitants of gardens; *Suén dōk* means a flowergarden. Wershoven, Lehr- und Lesebuch der Siamesischen Sprache, p. 28, reads *sūōn*, which the accent upon the *u*.